

Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective

Volume 7

Number 2 *Pervuvian Trajectories of Sociocultural Transformation*

Article 6

December 2013

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Recommended Citation

Gavidia Cannon, Oswaldo (2013) "Ayacucho, Goodbye and the Portrayal of a Nation's Contradictions," *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective*: Vol. 7 : No. 2 , Article 6.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/jgi/vol7/iss2/6>

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***Ayacucho, Goodbye* and the Portrayal of a Nation's Contradictions**

Oswaldo Gavidia Cannon

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Peru lived difficult times with the escalation of terrorism. People living in the Andean rural areas were caught between two fires—the terrorists and the military sent to control the latter—and many innocent people were killed or disappeared. Based on these events, Julio Ortega wrote the novella *Ayacucho, Goodbye*. In this narrative, the dead body of an indigenous peasant leaves his grave in Ayacucho and begins a journey to Lima, the capital of Peru, looking for the parts of his body that were not buried with him, which is really a quest for justice. Sometime after the publication of Ortega's novella, the Peruvian ensemble Yuyachkani created a version for the theater and also named it *Ayacucho, Goodbye*. This article proposes a commentary on the significance of the play as it deals with Peru's history and the hope for a better destiny. Some of the contradictions that have existed in Peru are examined as they help with interpreting the play.

It can be said that through the ideas of life beyond death, people reveal their thoughts and wishes about present conditions. A clear example of this appears in José María Arguedas' "Pongo's Dream." In this short story based on oral tradition, a *pongo* (very low indigenous servant from an Andean *hacienda*) is mistreated and compared to animals by an abusive landowner. Suddenly, when the *pongo* is granted permission to speak by the landowner in order to tell his dream in which it turns out both of them die and present themselves naked to be judged by Saint Francis. The landowner likes hearing that his body will be covered with the finest golden honey while the *pongo's* will be covered with excrement. Happy with what seems to be the reflection in heaven of social differences existing in the Peruvian Andes, the landowner urges the *pongo* to continue describing his dream only to be deceived by the end: they will have to lick each other for eternity. Through this dream the idea of justice appears as well as that of the intelligence of the Andean inhabitant portrayed by the *pongo*. It also depicts the existence of a country in which racial and cultural discrimination is unfortunately present. It is interesting, though, that there is no violence in the restoration pictured in this short story. Many of Arguedas' other narratives also emphasize the importance of recognizing the value of Andean culture.

Some years have passed since Arguedas wrote this story and though there have been some advances in Peruvian society towards ending and forgiving the mistreatment of the indigenous and rural population, the events that happened during the last two decades of the 20th century depicted once again the separation among different groups. Using the slogan of social justice, extreme violence was employed in Peru by the terrorist groups Shining Path and Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement. And, unfortu-

nately, there was also violence in the strategy used by the State to stop them. Discussion of this issue is present nowadays and continues to be a topic in academic, artistic, and political forums. In the critical years in which terrorism threatened Peru's integrity, the scholar Julio Ortega wrote the novella *Ayacucho, Goodbye* (1986). The narrative tells the story of Alfonso Cánepa, an indigenous peasant leader erroneously accused of terrorism who, after presenting himself to a police station in Quinua, Ayacucho, is tortured and killed there. The policemen responsible for the crime take the corpse, throw it into a ravine, and explode it with grenades in order to eliminate the evidence. Because of the explosion, some limbs separated from the body. The corpse is an eyewitness to his own death and burial by the same policemen. The dead man also observes that some of his body parts are not interred but placed inside a black plastic bag. After finding his way out from the rocks that covered his body, the mutilated corpse of Alfonso Cánepa decides to go to Lima, the capital of Peru, in order to recover his bones. On his way he encounters his family, a truck driver and his aid, an anthropologist,¹ a journalist,² a terrorist squadron, military (army and navy) and police patrols, different street sellers, and preachers who announce the end of the world. Once in Lima, he meets an eccentric ex-university professor called Ave Rock, people who consider themselves Incas, and a child beggar called Petiso.³ Except for his family (mother and father), all are able to see the corpse and, in some cases, even identify it. Finally, what is left of Alfonso Cánepa arrives to Lima's Main Square, where President Fernando Belaúnde is going to deliver a speech to the beggars about charity. He approaches Belaúnde and, in spite of being hit by his guards, manages to hand him a letter with his petition. The hope given by this action is soon destroyed as Cánepa sees the unopened envelope laying on the floor. At the end, unable to reunite all his body parts, with the help of the child beggar he goes to the cathedral and drops himself inside a coffin where the bones of Francisco Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru, supposedly lie. The

¹ The anthropologist symbolizes an attitude unfortunately present in some members of the Academy who position their contemporary Western ideology and culture above other traditions and beliefs. These scholars tend to consider their opinion and research about a culture or group to be the best, despising the thoughts and knowledge of the common people or other outsiders, thus, reducing significantly their knowledge of reality.

² After noticing that the doll is the incomplete and alive corpse of Alfonso Cánepa, the journalist tries to convince him in a cynical way to accept being interviewed. Being more interested in fame and glory, the journalist puts him inside a bag after Cánepa declines his offer. This journalist, whose interest in getting the news has more value than the person itself, tells the peasant that the anthropologist and he are advisors of the intelligence service. Criticism against unethical journalism is presented through this character in the novella.

³ In the novella, the name Petiso is given to the child beggar. The Spanish petiso is a word used to describe someone who is small. In the text it has a particular meaning because it makes a connection with the story of an eight year-old homeless shoe shiner who was electrocuted and died while sleeping next to a light in order to keep himself warm in Lima's Plaza San Martín. This child had the wish to found a house where homeless children could live. After his death, social conscience aroused and a shelter called House of the Petisos was opened in downtown Lima. Therefore, for some time, the word petiso was very popular to refer to child beggars or children that worked and lived in the streets. The play does not employ this expression and just refers, almost at the end, that a child helped Cánepa when he was being kicked by the guards protecting the President.

story is told mixing tragic events with humor, one of the elements that seems to characterize Latin American Literature.

The Creation of a Play

Some years after *Ayacucho, Goodbye* was published, members of the Peruvian theater ensemble Yuyachkani presented an adaptation. Even though the characters—played by a single actor—were reduced to two, the theatrical version maintained the feelings and symbolism from the narrative. According to Miguel Rubio, Yuyachkani's director, the transformation of the narrative into a play passed through three moments (Rubio Zapata, 2001, pp. 92-93):

1. Establishing the text of the play: The original text is strictly literary and not theatrical, and contains long conversations or elements that could distract the spectator's attention. These elements were removed to elaborate the new text for a one-actor play.
2. Defining the place and situation for the performance: The text would be performed in a funeral rite where a wake was held for the clothes of the missing person (Alfonso Cánepa) according to Andean custom. An actor would play the role of a *qolla*,⁴ an indigenous dancer from Paucartambo (Cuzco), who would allow the spirit of Cánepa to use his body to tell the story.
3. Investigating *in situ*—acting in the setting previously described—to define the characteristics of the body of the present character (*Qolla*) and that of the absentee (Cánepa). Since a single actor would be playing both roles, it was important to investigate how to portray them through performance itself. In this process, another member of Yuyachkani helped the director and actor by playing music with Andean instruments.

The story of the play is clearly summarized by Diana Taylor (2011):

The play opens as an indigenous masked dancer from Andean traditional fiestas arrives to see the clothes of the dead man laid out for mourning. With no body to mourn, and no witness to the violence, the clothes are all that attest to the existence of this life, now disappeared. The dancer, Q'olla, decides to take the shoes, arguing that he needs them more than the dead man. As he puts on the shoes, the spirit of Alfonso Cánepa comes back, speaking in him and through him to tell his story. With touching simplicity and humor, he relates his ordeal and outlines his demand: he wants his body parts together; he wants a decent burial; he wants the President of Peru to know about the violence visited on him, an innocent peasant. He writes a letter that he himself will hand deliver to the President. And, in a final act of personal reconstitution, he raids the tomb of the conqueror Pizarro, housed in Lima's cathedral. He helps himself to the bones he needs and buries himself in the shrine. (p. 292)

⁴ Even though in the Spanish and Quechua versions of the play *Qolla* and *Qulla*—there is no “o” in quechua—appear respectively as names of one of the characters, the English version published in *Stages of Conflict* uses Q'olla.

Because of the harshness of the events portrayed, the director and actors decided to include some humorous actions, such as the way in which Qolla appears or talks.

One more important element to emphasize about the staging is that the actor (whether playing Qolla or Cánepa) is constantly accompanied by music played by a woman dressed in black, as if she were mourning him. She represents everybody who has passed through the experience of losing a relative because of violence and, using the sounds from the instruments, transmits to Qolla and Cánepa the energy needed to continue communicating what had happened (Correa, 2009, p. 4).

Formal Characteristics

Ayacucho, Goodbye is a non-realistic one-act play in which the theatrical units of action, time, and space are followed. The term realistic is employed following the precepts that date from the European 19th century movement called Realism and whose principles have continued until today. It stated that art like a photograph should "reveal the essential structure of reality in a manner that pleurably and convincingly repeats and thereby vindicates the processes of sensory cognition" (Preminger & Brogan, 1993, p. 1016). According to this movement and contrary to Romantic practices, the presence of fantastic characters such as spirits or ghosts should not appear in a play because their existence cannot be proved objectively by our senses. Art should reflect contemporary external reality and deal with actual social problems. Even though the play deals with social issues and reveals essential parts of Peruvian society, employing a character—the Qolla—that lends his body to the spirit of the dead peasant Alfonso Cánepa to tell his story sets a distance with Realism.

Since Cánepa's spirit—the absent body—tells his story through the dancer—the present body—in the place where the burial is being held and that this action takes about an hour, there is no doubt that the neoclassical units of time and space are followed in the script. Even though sometimes there might be some difficulty in identifying the unit of action in a play, in the case of Yuyachkani's *Ayacucho, Goodbye* this problem disappears as we understand that the main conflict of the play is Cánepa's desire to recover his bones and his using the Qolla's body to tell the story.

The play was originally written in Spanish, but a Quechua version was done for audiences who had Quechua as their mother language. Yuyachkani had the purpose of performing it for the relatives of the missing during the years of terrorism and not all of them spoke or understood Spanish fluently. The fact that Spanish is the only language spoken by the majority of the people in power or in official positions has contributed to the exclusion of the indigenous population from many benefits of modern life and, even more important, from defending their rights. By performing in Quechua, Yuyachkani wanted to help the indigenous people in their audience heal their wounds and to connect different cultural groups.

Unless otherwise indicated, the commentaries that follow are based on the play, which does not mean that they cannot be applied to the novella by Julio Ortega.

Symbolism in *Ayacucho*, *Goodbye*

Ayacucho and Its Significance

Ayacucho, nowadays a department in the southern Peruvian Andes, is a name full of symbolism in Peruvian history and art.

During prehispanic times, Ayacucho was one of the lands where the Chancas, an indigenous civilization, settled and resisted for a long time the Inca expansion. The Chancas even attacked Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire (Tawantinsuyu), but were defeated and had to accept their rule.

Almost one century after the defeat of the Chancas, the Spaniards led by Francisco Pizarro and Diego de Almagro captured Atahualpa, the Inca, and began the conquest of the Tawantinsuyu. In the conquest, they were helped by indigenous nations that saw in the Spaniards an instrument to liberate themselves from the Inca government or who considered Atahualpa an illegitimate ruler. After conquering the empire, the Spanish Crown divided the territory between Pizarro and Almagro, but disputes regarding the extension of their territories, especially in reference to Cuzco, arose between them. The two leaders and associates of the conquest of the Inca Empire became enemies and a new war began. Almagro was executed by Pizarro's brothers and Pizarro, appointed marquis, was soon afterwards killed by the Almagrists. After their deaths, this contested situation continued. The licenciado Cristóbal Vaca de Castro was sent to Perú to establish order and to make the young Diego de Almagro accept the Crown's authority and will. The two armies encountered each other in Ayacucho, where the battle of Chupas, one of the bloodiest battles between the Spanish conquerors, took place on September 16, 1542. In Chupas, a place close to Huamanga, Ayacucho's capital,⁵ the Almagrists were seriously defeated and young Almagro had to flee. Indigenous people collaborated as allies in both armies. Why did the two armies select Ayacucho for a battlefield? According to historians, it was fate: they found each other in Chupas and they could no longer postpone fighting each other. Garcilaso de la Vega in the first part of his book *History of the Republic of Peru* gives account of this event.

The conquest was followed by the establishment of the Viceroyalty of Peru, whose capital, Lima, was the richest city in Spanish South America and remained part of the Spanish Empire many years after neighboring countries had declared their independence from Spain.⁶ Ayacucho was part of its broad territory and a prosperous one.

Even though Peru's Declaration of Independence was made in 1821, important parts of the country continued under the control of the Spanish Royalist Army as late as 1824. The other former South American Spanish colonies considered that their independence would only be ensured once the Royalist Army in Peru was defeated. The Independentist army, thus, was formed not only from soldiers from Peru, but also from some neighboring countries. Both armies encountered in Pampa de la Quinua, Ayacu-

⁵ At present the official name of the capital is also Ayacucho, a city located in the province of Huamanga. Nevertheless, locals tend to employ the name Huamanga to refer to downtown Ayacucho in remembrance of the city's former name.

⁶ Venezuela had declared its independence in 1811, Argentina in 1816, and Chile in 1818.

cho, in 1824 and after many hours of battling the Royalist Army was defeated and the capitulation signed by the former viceroy of Peru.

Therefore, Ayacucho was the place where the battle that secured Peru's political independence and that of other former Spanish territories in South America occurred almost 300 years after the arrival of Pizarro and Almagro. Since not all the inhabitants of Peru were convinced that the right time to politically separate from Spain had arrived, the battle at Ayacucho is not always considered a symbol of unity. Besides, members of the same families were part either of the Royalist or Independentist armies, formed mostly by soldiers coming from other Latin American countries whose independence had been declared many years before. At present in Quinua stands a memorial, inaugurated during General Juan Velasco's military government (1968-1974), with the following inscription "The Nation to the Victors of Ayacucho."

It is noteworthy that the new Republic of Peru kept taxation on the indigenous population for about 50 years, meaning that the new state continued exploiting them. During the Viceroyalty the population of Peru was divided under what some scholars have called the Republic of the Spanish and the Republic of the Indigenous. Different laws applied to these two groups under the idea that the indigenous needed to be protected as a father protects his children and therefore a special tax (indigenous taxation) was necessary. These taxes were abolished during 1821, but were later restated in 1826 under a different name: indigenous contribution. The reason was simple: the government was so broke that it needed desperately to increase its income and the solution was to make the indigenous carry on their backs what they had not caused. It was also said that the indigenous lived better under the Viceroyalty than under the Republic during the 19th century, which is really arguable and may hide certain ideologies. So, the battle of Ayacucho did not necessarily result in an improved life for the indigenous population.

A little more than a century and a half later, Ayacucho was to be known due to another type of violence: terrorism. Why was Ayacucho the place where terrorism founded its initial headquarters? The development and geographical situation of Ayacucho give some clues for an answer. Huamanga, its capital, was a middle-sized city in the Andes that was not so close to Lima or Arequipa, the two largest cities in Peru, thus making communications less frequent or effective with the center of power. We have to consider that internet was not of common usage during the 1980s, that the highways that connected the coast with the Andes needed renovation and that its airport, constructed during the 1970s, used to operate only during the mornings. Ayacucho's geography also offered places where the terrorists could easily hide and operate. Another factor is that Abimael Guzmán, Shining Path's founder and leader, had been a philosophy professor in Ayacucho's San Cristóbal de Huamanga National University from 1962 to 1975, where he commanded a very active communist party group. Poverty existing in Ayacucho was also a factor. It must be said that the activities of Sendero Luminoso were very carefully planned to achieve its political interest: armed struggle to install a Maoist government in Peru. It was in Chuschi, a small town in Ayacucho, where five hooded men broke into the voter registration office, and burnt the registry

and ballot boxes on the day before the general elections.⁷ Commenting on the unawareness of the people living in Lima—who were celebrating their candidate's victory—about this incident, Gustavo Gorriti (1999) writes:

Not one among this enthusiastic youths knew that war had begun the day before, and that their future, and the future of the rest of the nation, would be much more shaped by a mysterious incident that took place on election eve in a remote village than by the impressive victory, won the length and breadth of the country, that they celebrated. The burning of the ballot boxes in Chuschi, on May 17th, 1980. The first shot, treacherously muffled, began the fire of the millenarian war. (p. 16)

In terms of artistic production, Ayacucho is famous for its textiles, pottery, silver filigree, carved gourds, portable altarpieces, stone sculptures made with *piedra de Huamanga* (stone from Huamanga), and music. Quinua, where the Battle of Ayacucho occurred, is famous for its pottery. During the years of terrorism, many artists chose to remain in Ayacucho because they believed that in their land was the essence of their art. The richness of Ayacucho's art can be especially experienced during Easter by witnessing the religious ceremonies held throughout the city, its Holy Friday procession being among the most famous in Peru. These ceremonies continued being held during the terrorist period.

Therefore, it is significant that many of the events portrayed in the play occurred in Quinua and in other parts of Ayacucho. The name Quinua appears, almost at the beginning, when Alfonso Cánepa says:

Last week, in this month of July when there's no rain, I decided to go in person to the police station in Quinua. The sergeant stood up when he saw me walk in.
 "Don't play the fool. You're dangerous—you're a terrorist."
 I knew they'd accuse me of being a terrorist, but they knew I wasn't one. So what did they want me to confess to? (Rubio Zapata, 2011, p. 296)

Alfonso Cánepa and the Myths of Life, Death, and Resurrection

It is a common belief in some Andean communities that the different parts that make up the body are independent and can abandon it at night in order to travel. The part that leaves the body is expected to come back before daybreak. If it doesn't come back, the person will die. In the burial, you would see a complete body—with all its components—but the part that went away and did not return is substituted by a fake one: what you see is not the real part. The person who dies in this situation will not find peace: a person rests in peace only when his whole body is buried.

In *Ayacucho, Goodbye* Cánepa's body was mutilated and partially buried, so he needs to reunite all his body parts in order to rest in peace. The corpse, before being covered with stones, has observed that some of his limbs have been put away into a plastic bag by one of the policemen who killed him. This is the reason why, after mov-

⁷ After almost 12 years of military regime, Peruvian citizens voted to elect the nation's president on May 18, 1980.

ing away the stones that covered his half-body, Cánepa leaves his own tomb and decides to travel to Lima:

I yelled and what came out was shrill and unpleasant like the screech of a wet cat. I yelled again, "Give me my body. Where have you taken my bones?"
Whatever happens, I'm going to Lima to recover what's mine. (Rubio, 2011, p. 297)

In Andean conception, life comes from Pachamama (Mother Earth) and people need to get back to our origin after death, thus, the importance of a burial. If that does not happen, our existence would be unhappy and our souls would wander around the world as pariahs. This is complemented by Christian beliefs or customs, as expressed by his mother: "They've killed my boy. His soul won't be able to rest. We have to find him and give him a Christian burial." (Rubio, 2011, p. 297).

The idea of not resting in peace until all the parts have been reunited or buried can be traced in many cultural traditions, including Greek and Egyptian mythologies. In both cases, the rules that establish the traditions for the dead body are related to divinity and to life in the other world.

The above can be observed in the Greek myths present in Euripides' *Medea* and Sophocles' *Antigone*. Medea, a sorceress of divine descent and daughter of Aeetes, king of Colchia, helps Jason and the Argonauts to steal the Golden Fleece. While fleeing with Jason and her brother Absyrtis in the sail Argo, Medea kills her brother, cuts the body into pieces, and scatters the pieces into the sea in order to force his father to stop and collect them, hence, impeding the king's army to capture them. Aeetes was aware that, in order to bury his son according to the divine laws, he had to collect the parts of his corpse, no matter if that meant letting the Argonauts and Medea escape. Euripides' tragedy *Medea*, which we assume to be part of a trilogy, does not center in this part of the myth, but mentions in a general way that the actions committed by the sorceress have led her into her unhappiness: Jason, for whom she betrayed her kinsmen, is going to abandon her in order to marry the princess of Corinth.

In the case of *Antigone*, she opposes King Creon's edict that denies sepulture to her brother Polynices: his body is to be left to rot and be eaten by birds and dogs. Antigone considers this decree invalid because it opposes divine laws and, aware that she will be sanctioned with death, dares to cover twice Polynices' corpse with soil before being captured by the guards. Taken to the king's presence, she admits her deed and facing Creon says to him:

Yes; for it was not Zeus that had published me that edict; not such are the laws set among men by the justice who dwells with the gods below; nor deemed I that thy decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes of heaven. For their life is not of today or yesterday, but from all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth.

Not through dread of any human pride could I answer to the gods for breaking these. Die I must, -I knew that well (how should I not?)-even without thy edicts. But if I am to die before my time, I count that a gain: for when any one lives, as I do, compassed about with evils, can such an one find aught but gain in death?

So for me to meet this doom is trifling grief; but if I had suffered my mother's son to lie in death an unburied corpse, that would have grieved me; for this, I am not grieved.

And if my present deeds are foolish in thy sight, it may be that a foolish judge arraigns me folly. (Sophocles)

In *Ayacucho, Goodbye* similar thoughts are expressed by Cánepa after leaving a city where many people were being mourned. These ideas clearly appear in the first letter⁸ that he thinks of:

Dear Mr. President:

(...)

On the 15th of July I was arrested by the civil guard in my town, held incommunicado, tortured, burned and mutilated. I was dead, but was declared disappeared. (...) As you well know, all the laws of the nation, all international treaties, as well as all charters of human rights proclaim not only the inalienable human right to live but also the right to one's own death and burial with a complete body. (...) One of your victims, who has nothing more to lose, tells you this from his own experience. I want my bones, I want my literal, complete body, even if it is entirely dead. (Rubio, 2011, p. 208)

Similarly, in spite of differences regarding burial ceremonies and tombs in the kingdoms of ancient Egypt, the idea of conserving the body as a whole remained essential. Mummification is done, for example, by the goddess Isis with her husband Osiris. According to this myth, Set had cut Osiris' body into pieces and scattered them across Egypt. Isis, in a bird form, finds the dismembered parts and restores Osiris' body, often with the help of other deities. Her husband's parts are embalmed together and the whole body is rebuilt. Isis, still in bird form, fans life into his body with her wings and copulates with him. Their son Horus is later born and is said to be Osiris' reincarnation. Osiris stays very short in this world and goes to live in the Duat (Underworld) because he has already died.

An Andean myth connected with resurrection is Inkarrí or Incarri. This name comes from the combination of two words that have the same meaning: the Quechua word *inka* (king or ruler) and the Spanish noun *rey* (king). This brief explanation introduces the idea that the myth originated after the Spanish arrived to Peru. According to one of the versions of the Inkarrí myth, the body of the Inca was dismembered and his head buried separately. From the interred head, the body will reconstitute itself and new and prosperous times will come again after Inkarrí resurrects. This myth, which has a messianic content and is a reaction to the Spanish invasion (Pease, 2004, p. 217), has been connected with two characters of Peruvian history who revolted against the Spanish rule and whose bodies were also mutilated: the Inca Túpac Amaru I (1545-1572) and Túpac Amaru II (1738-1781). Among the coincidences between Cánepa and

⁸ During the Viceroyalty of Peru, indigenous people wrote letters or memorials to the King of Spain informing him of their unfair situation and pleading for justice. Some examples about Ayacucho can be found in the second volume of Miriam Salas' doctoral thesis *Poder y producción mercantil: Huamanga a través de sus obrajes, siglos XVI al XVIII* (*Power and mercantile production: Huamanga through its obrajes, from the XVI to the XVIII centuries*). In the novella and play, a reference is made to *The first new chronicle and good government* by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, who was born in Ayacucho in the 16th century. This chronicle was addressed to the King of Spain wishing to obtain justice. Neither Cánepa's letter nor Guaman's work were read by the addressee.

the Inkarrí is the rebuilding of the body and the hope for better times. Nevertheless, there is a difference between them, as stated by Rubio (2001):

In Ortega's narrative, a dead peasant decides to travel to Lima to ask the President to help him look for the part of his bones that possibly his assassins have taken to Lima. The first association I had with this text was the myth of the Inkarrí, which deals with the Inca's dismembered body that reconstitutes itself under the earth in order to be born again. This character [Cánepa], like a contemporary Inkarrí, does not wait for the reconstitution of his body, instead he decides to go in search of his missing bones. (p. 92, translation mine)

According to these traditions (Andean, Greek, Egyptian), a material support—the dead person's body—is needed for a good spiritual life. In this fact also lies the importance of collecting the dismembered parts. At the end of the play, after failing in his attempt to obtain the president's support to reunite all his limbs and bones, Cánepa puts himself in the tomb that contains Francisco Pizarro's bones and completes his body with them waiting for new and different times. Has the resurrected mutilated body of Alfonso Cánepa achieved his purpose? Can he rest in peace now?

Political Authority in Ayacucho, Goodbye

While the play uses the common noun "President" to refer to the President of Peru, the novella employs the name of one of Peru's presidents: Fernando Belaúnde. The main reason might be that the common noun makes the character more universal, that is, that the situations and features connected to the character are not limited to a single individual. At the end, the president is being accused of not doing his best to serve his country. Another reason might be more political: not using the name of a well-known politician who lived while the play was being performed protected Yuyachkani from accusations from people who may feel offended or pretend so. Architect Fernando Belaúnde founded the political party Acción Popular (Popular Action) and was famous for having visited many of Peru's rural areas. He was the president of Peru in two terms: from 1963 to 1968—overthrown by a military coup d'état—and, after his reelection, from 1980 to 1985. Considered of aristocratic origin, during his second term he was sometimes portrayed in comic strips and sit-coms as dwelling in the clouds. Besides, his ministers and himself were mentioned as the celestial court in allusion to their lack of competence to acknowledge and to cope with many of the nation's crucial problems, one of them being terrorism. As a matter of fact, the existence of terrorism was constantly denied by the central government authorities during the first years of Belaúnde's term. The government preferred to call them *abigeos* (cattle rustlers).

Belaúnde was famous because of his elegance while giving discourses, which is satirized in the encounter of Cánepa and the president in *Ayacucho, Goodbye*. Almost at the end of the play, Cánepa arrives to Lima's Plaza de Armas (Main Square) and hears that the president is going to give a speech to the beggars congregated there about Christian charity. He sees a good opportunity to hand him the letter asking for his missing limbs and bones.

The cathedral was almost empty at that hour. From the top of the bell tower I could see the vast Plaza de Armas, the Government Palace, and all the corners occupied by assault troops. Little by little, all kinds of beggars, some one-armed, some crippled, some ill, entered the Plaza. I decided to go down. I'd easily pass for a beggar.

"Does anyone know why we're here?"

"The President is giving a little speech about the need for Christian charity."

What luck! I could give him my letter in person. Voices giving orders were heard at the doors of the palace. At last the President in person, his armed raised, moved to the center of his escort and walked forward, stopping right in front of me. I couldn't believe it. . . His voice sounded pleasant but remote. I do not know who he was talking to, certainly not to us. (Rubio, 2011, p. 299)

Not only are the beggars addressed in a language not appropriate for them, thus making the speech useless, but also the topic is not for the ones in the square. Even though Christian charity should not be reduced to just giving material goods, it is clear that the purpose of this part of the play is to show that the president is directing the speech to a mistaken audience, for the speech should be given to those who can help the needy. This representation sarcastically emphasizes the disconnection of politicians with reality.

Even though Belaúnde's government did not take the necessary measures against terrorism, many actions that showed his democratic beliefs were taken. As a matter of fact, elections were held all over the country to elect local authorities (mayors), the newspapers that were confiscated by the previous military government were returned to their legitimate owners and freedom of speech was granted. With these three actions democracy and its foundations were protected, but by neglecting terrorism from its start exactly the opposite occurred and democracy was put in danger. Terrorism continued expanding during President Alan García's first term (1985-1990), which also left the country with a devastated economy. García, member of the political party Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance), was also well known for being a great orator. Terrorism was beaten during Alberto Fujimori's first government (1990-1995), who justified his self-coup d'état (April 5, 1992) arguing that the action was necessary because the Congress constantly impeded taking action against terrorism and enacting the reforms needed to ameliorate the country's economy. A few months after the self-coup, Abimael Guzmán, founder of Shining Path, was captured in a middle class neighborhood in Lima.⁹ Terrorism was actually controlled during Fujimori's presidency and the economy of the country improved. He was later accused of corruption, violation of human rights, and fostering a fraudulent second reelection.¹⁰ In spite of antidemocratic measures taken during his rule, various

⁹ Abimael Guzmán was sentenced to life imprisonment and is serving his term in the naval base in El Callao, a province and port next to Lima.

¹⁰ A Peruvian of Japanese descent, Alberto Fujimori was president of Peru for three terms (1990-1995, 1995-2000, 2000) and fled to Japan a few months after the start of his third period accused of irregularities during the elections. Because of his double nationality—his parents had registered him in the Japanese Consulate in Lima—he could not be extradited from Japan. Suddenly, he went to live to Chile in 2005 and was finally extradited in 2007. He was judged for corruption and human rights abuses. For the latter, he was sentenced to a 25-year incarceration. Fujimori is a controversial figure in Peruvian politics and continues dividing public opinion, as manifested in

observers consider that the defeat of terrorism and the improving of the economy during his presidency helped to support democracy.

Using the figure of the president, the role of politicians and political authorities is also criticized in another part of the play:

At last the President in person (. . .). Here was the man responsible for my death, but I was sure he didn't even know my name and had more than one explanation to prove his personal innocence. Clearly he was a politician. But if laws mean anything he was directly responsible, even if he had not given his formal sanction to the multiplication of death in this country. Now that his government was coming to an end, he at least should feel with his eyes the gaze of one of his victims. (Rubio, 2011, p. 299)

Composing a New Identity and Utopia

In Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* the existence of a place where laws are simple, fair, and respected by their citizens is emphasized. Alfonso Cánepa's life, death, and life after death would not have occurred in a place like Utopia; but, in Peru towards the end of the 20th century, the events portrayed in *Ayacucho*, *Goodbye* closely resemble the experience lived by many Peruvians. As this character points out with disbelief in the middle of the play:

It must have been after we left Abancay, more or less, that I began to look at the people who crossed the road at regular intervals. Some traveled on enormous rocks. I suspected they were like me, disappeared, and I was overcome with emotion. Wasn't I the only one who was going to Lima to recover my bones? (Rubio, 2011, p. 298)

Because of centralism, many peasants and people who lived far away from Lima had to come to this city to protect themselves from violence, to look for the missing members of their families, or to search for justice during terrorism. As stated earlier, violence was used by terrorists and by the military sent to the Andes to stop them. Since the play tells the story of Cánepa, who was murdered and mutilated by policemen, some readers or spectators may erroneously interpret that the message of the play is to support terrorist actions and to attack those who oppose them. A play cannot contain everything that occurs, so Yuyachkani, following the narrative that inspired their work, centers on a piece of reality that they consider needs to be told. Let us read what Julio Ortega (2008) writes in the introduction to his novella:

I could not see the staging until 1991, when it came to New York. I watched it in the second of the two nights it was presented in the Pregones Theater in the Bronx. I was told that the night before, Sendero [Shining Path] had been in the audience and when the manifest against Sendero was read (a gesture of protest against violence inside violence, which I had been careful to state clearly), the roar "Sen-dero, Sen-dero. . ." was heard in the house. The Yuyas [members of Yuyachkani] had been threatened, but they

the reactions after he asked President Ollanta Humala for pardon. About the contradictions existing in Peru, the reform of labor laws done during Fujimori's government, which reduced the workers' rights, were praised and applied by people who later criticized him.

did not stop doing their own path, that of the recovering of a Peruvian life that was able to respond to killings. (pp. 11-12, translation mine)

Alfonso Cánepa comes to Lima hoping to get justice, but he is disillusioned by the President's reaction: his petition is finally ignored.

I was trying to recover with the boy's help, when I saw my letter crumpled and unopened, on the dark pavement. Again I felt alone and didn't know what to do. I looked at the close balconies of the Government Palace, where the conquistador Francisco Pizarro had been assassinated. I looked at the Plaza de Armas, now almost empty. (Rubio, 2011, p. 299)

Aware that the President will not help him recover the rest of his body, that is, rest in peace for eternity, Cánepa leaves the Plaza de Armas and convinces the child to enter the nearby cathedral with him. Is he expecting a miracle?

"Let's go, I'll hide you in the caves along the Rimac River," the boy said.

We were about to turn the corner at the Palace, when the sight of the cathedral made me stop, full of doubts (...)

"Come with me."

The darkness under the great domes of the cathedral had deepened. As I passed by the sarcophagus of Francisco Pizarro, I hesitated. The case was made of glass and marble with a golden lion of Spain on top, and inside you could see the remains of the savage founder of Lima: a ruined skull and a few scattered bones.

Help me, we have to raise the lid. Here, take the true skull of Pizarro. You can sell it. And these bones, too."

The boy stared at me and said:

"Everyone will think you're Pizarro. That's all right, we'll bring you flowers. But I swear, when I'm President of Peru, I'll look for your bones." He was pale when he made his vow.

Inside the wide coffin my voice sounded like someone else's. I heard myself in the echoes, and I realized my time was near. Before long I would rise up from this earth like a column of stone and fire. (Rubio, 2011, pp. 299-230)

The remains of Francisco Pizarro,¹¹ who conquered the Inca's empire, rest in the cathedral's first chapel to the right coming from the street. This was granted to him for being the founder of the city. Since a long time has passed after Pizarro's death and burial, it has sometimes been discussed if the skull and bones inside the coffin really belonged to him. This adds irony to the fact that a man that can be catalogued as indigenous will occupy the tomb where the remains of a non-indigenous person lays and be confused with him by the visitors. There is still something more important related to Cánepa completing his body with Pizarro's bones: the integration of the conquered and

¹¹ A statue of Francisco Pizarro used to be first in front of the cathedral and then in a small square next to the Plaza de Armas. It was removed from there by Lima's local authorities in 2003 alleging that he did not deserve a monument and was placed, without its pedestal, in a park next year. This issue was commented in the media and shows the problems regarding identity and acceptance of the past that exist in Peru. A funny fact is that the statue was originally not meant to portray Pizarro.

the conqueror, of races and traditions. Many years ago in his own style, the Peruvian writer José María Arguedas dealt with the problems caused by discriminating against the Andean world, discrimination that excluded it from the conception of a modern Peruvian nation. In *Ayacucho, Goodbye* this integration of races and cultures is presented in Cánepa's last action: his remains are mixed with those of Pizarro to form a new being. There is no violence in the way in which he, finally, achieves his new purpose—not anymore limited to completing his body parts—through his own actions. The old Cánepa has somehow rested in peace by symbolically returning to Pachamama (Mother Earth) inside Pizarro's tomb and has formed a new Peruvian with a new mission: the integration of people and the end of injustice. The play ends with a door opened to reconciliation.

In spite of specific mentions about Peru, the reflections contained in *Ayacucho, Goodbye* are universal since they can be applied to different times and places, such as the conflicts occurring nowadays among nations.

Final Considerations

In 1912 José de la Riva-Agüero y Osma (1885-1944), a Peruvian historian and aristocratic member of the elite, traveled through the southern Peruvian Andes. In this long journey he stopped, among other places, in Pampa de la Quinua (Ayacucho) and wondered about the causes of Peru's decline after the independence. He stated that the main reason was that the badly constituted dominant groups (aristocracy, bourgeois, military) had not fulfilled their duties, being the interweaving of the diverse traditions and feelings an essential responsibility (Riva-Agüero, *Paisajes Peruanos*, 1995, pp. 146-147). Without disregarding other possible considerations about this topic, Riva-Agüero's thought is a good start for some final reflections about *Ayacucho, Goodbye*.

The many circumstances that led to the escalation of terrorism during the 1980s and early 1990s did not just appear on the eve of the events that occurred in Chuschi, Ayacucho, before the 1980 general elections. It is also true that the cruelty and denial of justice suffered by Alfonso Cánepa cannot be disconnected from his social condition (indigenous peasant) and the persistent feeling among many sectors of Peruvian society that the traditions of indigenous groups hinder progress. The character of the president from *Ayacucho, Goodbye* illustrates the attitude of a governing class and elite that lived protected during terrorism or who consciously ignored the situation of rural or poor areas, thus, not assuming their functions.

In the dark reality that Alfonso Cánepa had to experience there is still place for hope, as can be observed in two actions that occur in Lima's cathedral¹² at the end of the play: the promise made by the child—"I swear, when I am president of Peru, I'll look for your bones" (Rubio, 2011, p. 300)—and the transformation of the dead body into a new being that integrates different traditions existing in Peru. In both cases, *Ayacucho, Goodbye* is not just the farewell to the suffering, war, division, and injustice of the past, but also the desire to welcome a new or better era.

¹² It is significant for the plot that these actions, related to a myth, occur in a religious setting.

And for that era to come closer it is indispensable for Peruvians to remember what happened during the last two decades of the 20th century and its causes, which cannot be separated from discrimination and centralism. The buoyant economic situation existing nowadays in Peru¹³ could possibly result in diminishing the seriousness of its recent history and lead to repeating the same mistakes. Among the many means to prevent this loss of memory, art occupies a place, theater has a role.

Since its foundation in 1971, the theater ensemble Yuyachkani has contributed—mixing techniques that incorporate Peruvian folklore—to think about important aspects of Peru's social reality, including the violence lived by rural citizens during the end of the previous century. Yuyachkani is a Chanca or Ayacucho's Quechua word that literally means "I am remembering," although it has also been translated as "I am thinking, I am remembering" considering that both cannot—or should not—be separated. With the performance and script of *Ayacucho, Goodbye*—inspired by Julio Ortega's novella—the ensemble helps maintain in our memories an important part of Peru's reality of living with terrorism while also hoping that past errors would be overcome by present or future generations. It is a hope founded on the belief that the diverse Peruvian cultural groups can learn to live together in ways where the indigenous traditions occupy an important place.

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¹³ In spite of the economic boom, the living conditions of the majority of Peruvians have not improved at the same rate. More investment is needed in education, health, technology, and industry.